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SUBJECT: ANBAR GEO DIRECTOR'S PREPARATIONS FOR PROVINCIAL
ELECTIONS

[1](#)1. (U) This is a PRT Anbar reporting cable. This message is Sensitive But Unclassified; handle accordingly. Not for distribution on the Internet.

SUMMARY

[1](#)2. (U) On October 25, Anbar Governorate Electoral Office (GEO) Director Khalid Rajab met with PRT PolOff and MNF-West to discuss coalition formation, candidate nominations, election observer preparations, and security preparations for 2009 Anbar provincial elections. The Anbar GEO has completed the first drafts of the security plan, the logistics plan, and the media plan for the elections. He confirmed that the Iraqi Police in conjunction with the Anbar GEO have completed security assessments for all 277 polling centers planned for Anbar. He suggested having one coalition force (CF) person at the Anbar GEO Operations Center on Election Day in order to facilitate a rapid response to problems that may arise.
END SUMMARY.

ELECTION OBSERVERS AND POLLING STATIONS

[1](#)3. (U) Khalid Rajab, the Anbar GEO, stated that trained election observers were critical to the success of the provincial elections, and that these election observers need to be educated people well-trained for this task. He told of one election observer during the voter registration period who went to a voter registration center, put his name on the observer list and immediately left without observing anything. Due to stories like this, Khalid wants to ensure the observers are "good people" who know what their responsibilities are. He also noted that some Anbaris are passing incorrect information about the elections and election observers. According to the Anbar GEO, neither the election observer registration period the training course for observers has been defined. He plans to conduct one-day training courses for all registered observers before election day.

[1](#)4. (U) According to Khalid, Civil Society Organizations will have to register with the Anbar GEO Media Advisor for observer training. Khalid estimates that there will be at least 1,933 observers; 116 of these observers will be assigned to polling centers in remote areas of Anbar. He noted that there were 1,227 registered observers for the voter registration period, many of whom provided reports to the Anbar GEO. Khalid noted that voter registration was successful and uneventful, and believed elections would also be uneventful.

[1](#)5. (SBU) The GEO has also verified the location and security needs for all of the planned 277 polling centers. Each of the 277 polling centers will have multiple ballot boxes in order to service the projected 440,000 voters. The GEO is planning on 400 voters per ballot box, with several ballot boxes in each polling center. The Iraqi Police will vote a few days prior to the election in specified voting centers.

The Anbar GEO also plans to support detainee and hospital patient voting. He suggested having one coalition force (CF) person at the Anbar GEO Operations Center on Election Day in order to facilitate a rapid response to problems that may arise. Otherwise, the GEO did not want to have CF visible to the public at the polling stations or elsewhere.

SECURITY

¶16. (SBU) The Anbar GEO, in conjunction with the Iraqi Police, has conducted security assessments of all of the 277 polling centers. He noted that there were no "hot spots" in Anbar requiring significantly increased security. Khalid did however note that there were two locations which had unresolved security issues, one in Gharmah and one in Rutbah, and three areas with a potential for violence during the election that concerned him: Fallujah/Gharma Area, Humayra/Angur in Ramadi, and Hit.

¶17. (U) During last spring and summer, Anbari notable Hamid Heiss's unfiltered public comments raised Khalid's concern (Heiss said that the Independent High Electoral Commission was an IIP organization and that Khalid Rajab was an IIP hack). Since meeting with him in September 2008, Khalid Rajab indicates that he and Heiss now have a healthy dialogue. However, as the elections draw near, Khalid Rajab is understandably concerned that renewed saber rattling from any parties will undermine peaceful elections.

POTENTIAL REASONS FOR LOW VOTER PARTICIPATION

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¶18. (U) Khalid noted four main reasons why Anbaris might not vote in the upcoming provincial elections:

- They do not trust the process.
- They are illiterate.
- They are women.
- Some will just stay away.

COMMENT

¶19. (SBU) GEO Director Khalid Rajab showed PolOff and MNF-West the completed Security, Logistics, and Media Plans for the Provincial Elections, confirming that that they have been coordinated with their appropriate Iraqi counterparts. He agreed to provide a copy of the plans to MNF-W and the PRT to support coordination in the coming week. The Anbar GEO continues the high quality performance that made the voter registration period successful. END COMMENT.
CROCKER